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## BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS IN SUSPECTED PLAGUE CASES.

The following circular relative to the shipment of specimens in suspected plague cases and containing a list of laboratories of the United States Public Health Service has recently been sent out from the Bureau to health officers.

### SHIPMENT OF TISSUE OF PERSONS OR ANIMALS SUSPECTED OF SUFFERING FROM BUBONIC PLAGUE.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
BUREAU OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE,  
Washington, August 30, 1920.

BUREAU CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 227.

*To Officers of the Public Health Service and State and Local Health Officers:*

Owing to the appearance of plague in several American ports it is important that all cases of suspected plague, both in man and animals, be subjected to a bacteriological examination.

1. The following material from persons or rodents suffering from plague may be sent to laboratories:

#### *Human Cases (Living).*

- (a) Pus or gland fluid from buboes aspirated by syringe, or collected after incision, on agar slants.
- (b) Portions of tissues affected, removed at operation, in sterilized bottles, securely stoppered.
- (c) Blood specimens, in sterilized sealed glass ampules or test tubes
- (d) Cultures of suspected organisms, on agar slants.

#### *Human Cases (Necropsy).*

- (a) Portions of the affected tissues—preferably bubo, lung, and spleen—in sterilized glass bottles, securely stoppered

#### *Rodents.*

- (a) The whole rodent carcass, in fruit preserving jar.

2. Do not place tissues nor rodents, in a preservative. The bacteriological diagnosis of plague rests upon the production of the disease in laboratory animals, and the isolation and growth of the causative organism, *Bacillus pestis*. Any preservative that kills this organism will defeat the purpose of the examination. If decomposition of the specimen is feared, it may be placed in a tight container and this in turn surrounded by ice in a larger container, preferably of wood. Every specimen should be plainly marked, preferably by ordinary pencil, showing the date and the exact location from which it was taken.

3. The shipper must make certain that the specimen is packed in such manner as to prevent possible danger to those handling the same, provided the package is properly handled.

In this connection it is necessary that specimens be wrapped in sufficient cotton, or other absorbent material, to prevent leakage of fluid from the container should the glass be broken.

#### THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS SHOULD BE EXPLICITLY OBSERVED.

1. *Ship by express.*—Federal laws prohibit the shipping of plague-infected material, or cultures, by mail.

2. Do not make packages too small, as small packages are more likely to be lost in transit, or overlooked.
3. Each package should be marked as follows:

## NOTICE.

This package contains perishable specimens for  
bacteriological examination.

## PLEASE EXPEDITE.

Material should be sent to the nearest one of the following Service Laboratories, which will make examination and report thereon:

1. The Hygienic Laboratory, Twenty-fifth and E Streets NW., Washington, D. C.
2. U. S. Plague Laboratory, No. 200 Duboce Street, San Francisco, Calif.
3. U. S. Plague Laboratory, No. 525 St. Charles Street, City Hall, New Orleans, La.
4. U. S. Plague Laboratory, Medical Department, University of Texas, Galveston, Tex.
5. U. S. Plague Laboratory, State Department of Health Building, Pensacola, Fla.
6. U. S. Plague Laboratory, Beaumont, Tex.

Respectfully,

H. S. CUMMING,  
*Surgeon General.*

## RESULTS OF ANTIMALARIAL MEASURES ON THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS.

The annual medical report of the Island of Cyprus for 1919 states that the antimalarial measures which were begun in 1913 were successfully continued during 1919 and resulted in a further reduction in the prevalence of malaria for that year.<sup>1</sup>

The malaria incidence has fallen steadily from 10,035 cases treated in 1912 to 1,962 in the year 1919, and the spleen index rate has declined constantly from 17.2 per cent in 1913 to 5.2 in 1919.

The following table, covering the period 1912 to 1919, shows the steady reduction in the prevalence of malaria as indicated by the total number of cases treated and the percentage of enlarged spleens found on examination of school children each fall by the medical officers:

Year.	Total cases treated.	Spleen rate.	Year.	Total cases treated.	Spleen rate.
1912.....	10,035	.....	1916.....	3,752	7.6
1913.....	7,342	17.2	1917.....	2,709	6.0
1914.....	6,622	15.3	1918.....	2,414	5.1
1915.....	4,539	11.5	1919.....	1,962	5.2

The estimated population of the island of Cyprus in the year 1919 was 311,108, as compared with 306,997 in the year 1918.

Antimalarial work, including draining of marshes and a fresh-water lake and construction and repair of aqueducts and drains, was carried on during the year.

<sup>1</sup> Notes on this work for the years 1917 and 1918 were published in Public Health Reports, Nov. 29, 1918, and Sept. 26, 1919.